

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING, THIS IS THE NER.

ISSUE 283 AUTUMN 2021

NER COUPLER

**THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION**



NARROW GAUGE DOUBLE HEADERS ARE JUST ONE OF MANY TREATS THAT AWAIT THE ATTENDEES, IN A FEW SHORT WEEKS AT THE NER'S MILLCITY 2021 CONVENTION.

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OF MANY GREAT OPPORTUNITIES THAT AWAIT
THE ATTENDEES OF MILL CITY 2021.
PHOTO BY AL POMEROY

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION

www.nernmra.org

NER COUPLER

The official publication of the
Northeastern Region of the National
Model Railroad Association
Issue 283 Autumn 2021

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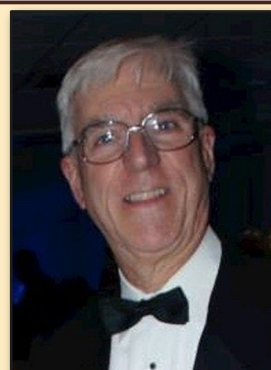
PRINTING

Rapid Press, Stamford, Ct.

©2021 Northeastern Region NMRA

NER Coupler is published four times a year by
and for the members of the Northeastern Region
of the National Model Railroad Association.
Subscription rate is \$12 per year. Any items
related to the activities of the Northeastern
Region and its member divisions are gladly
accepted by email. Photos submitted must be
high resolution of at least 300 dpi in order to be
considered. Please send change of address to
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TRAIN ORDER #1 ED J. O'ROURKE, MMR PRESIDENT-ELECT, NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA



Since I'm sure many of you have no idea who Ed O'Rourke is, I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself to the Region.

My involvement with Model Railroading began when my Dad came home from serving in Germany during the Korean War with a set of Marklin Trains. He had them set up in the attic above our second-floor apartment, and two-year-old me found them fascinating. Dad moved on to American HO when we moved to a home with a basement and those Marklin trains, set up on a 4 X 8 table became mine and my brothers to run. Much later, they were set up in my own basement for my daughters, and I have hopes of passing them along at some point to my grandchildren.

I grew up in Southern Connecticut, and watching the New Haven electrics gave me a love for traction. Despite the fact that I have lived in Syracuse for 55 years, my modeling has centered on depicting the change-over from steam and diesel to electrics at New Haven in HO scale. In my former home, with a large backyard I got into large scale. Although the climate in upstate New York limits such activity to a few months at best. A move 10 years ago to a new home in a condo community eliminated the outdoor layout and forced me to fit the layout I wanted into a smaller space. Retirement (I did 41 years as a middle school band director) and the pandemic have resulted in the layout being "finished," and completing my MMR.

I first joined the NMRA as a teenager in the 1960's, inspired by a visit to the layout of Bob Higgins, a local modeler and NMRA member in northern Connecticut. I stayed a member through college, marriage, and first job, but grad-school, first home (and first layout), and children caused me to let my membership expire, and I was a "lone-wolf" for many years.

Then, in November 2000, I stopped by the Central New York Division table at the local train show and met Jim Heidt, founder of the Division, past NER President and Member-Aid Chair. Jim convinced me I should join the Division. So I filled out the form, mailed my check, and attended a Division meeting. I enjoyed the company, met a number of interesting people and decided that this was worth doing. The Division mostly meets in members homes, so I saw a lot of layouts that I found inspiring. I also met a great many people I never would have otherwise who I now consider friends. I got involved in operations and joined the Tuesday night group working on and operating Jim's Ogdensburg and Norwood. I was on the Division Convention Committee when we hosted the 2008 and 2012 Region Conventions in Syracuse and had my layout open for the 2008 Convention. I was Co-chair of the Empire Junction 2019 NER Convention and serve on the Region convention committee. In 2008, the late Brian Curry, MMR, then division Superintendent, appointed me and Ed Olszewski co-editors of the Division Red Markers newsletter, on the theory that "two Eds are better than one," positions we both still hold. I was elected Division Chief Clerk, a position I have just resigned to concentrate on the Region Presidency. When Bill Brown, MMR, became National Contest Chair, he nominated me to take his place as New York State Director on the NER Board of Directors, which became the Western Director position I held until this election.

I want to thank John Doebling and Bob Dennis for their service to the Region over the last 6 years, and for encouraging me to run for this position. John will be busy with his election as NMRA Eastern Director, but has said he will stay involved as Past President. And one of my first acts as President is going to be appointing Bob "Special Assistant to the President" so he's not going away either. I also am enormously grateful to Dave Insley for taking on the Vice President position. And thank you to everyone who participated in the election.

Enough for now. I've got a couple of buildings on the workbench to finish for the O&N.



PC A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

CHRIS CARFARO

EDITOR



I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING IT BUT,
TODAY I'M AN "N SCALER"

It's been a year since I took over the *NER Coupler* editorship from Jeff Paston. My first issue was January 2021 and in my first editorial is where I asked if "we were inclusive or a bunch of old white elitists." I received a fair number of emails about that column. Some complimentary others not. All but one reply was respectful as they questioned my reasoning for the avenue I chose. I listened, they listened and I let each of them know that I would keep their comments in mind as we moved forward. We appreciated each other's willingness to listen. We found we had much, much more in common than not. Curiosity can be a very good thing.

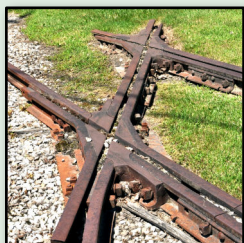
So, I don't model in N scale. Although the new stuff coming onto the market is blowing my mind at how nice it is. But, I want to run operations. That's not possible in N scale, right? Wrong, just ask Albany Ntrak or other clubs. *Of course* ops can be run regardless of which scale we model in.

It's in my head, just because I haven't experienced N scale ops, shouldn't bias me away from the scale. So, maybe its time to look around, find my "peeps", as my wife would say. An important element here is to look around, listen and be curious. Ask questions.

In late July I received an email from Ernie Johansen, a long time N scaler and NMRA member, living in western Mass. Ernie had decided to donate his **Rutland Railway Company at Maple Junction** to the Rutland Railroad Association. The plan was to drive the layout up to the Center Depot in Rutland where it could be enjoyed and appreciated by members and visitors alike. At first I was ready to say "nope, can't make it" which was standard practice for us in Vermont during this pandemic. But then I thought, why not? I'm vaccinated, I'll mask if I need to and hey, I'm a journalist, I'm a frick'n reporter for the *NER Coupler* damn it. Yeah, baby, I'll be there! And so I replied, but in less colorful language. Give me a curiosity Gold Star.

And so I went. On the drive down, I was thinking about how

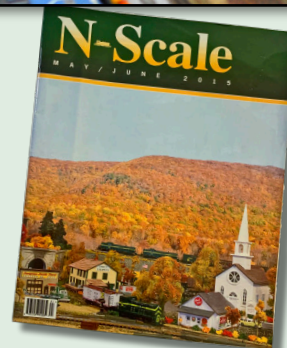
to go about building a street track crossing by hand. And right off the bat, pulling into the driveway at the Center Depot was a cast iron, bolt together rail crossing. Outstanding! I parked, shot some photos, and looked around. Instant inspiration: Maintenance of Way equipment, sidings along a building, a branch line rolling off to the right out of sight, a Rutland caboose and of course a fantastic freight depot. Ernie and the crew at the depot had already moved the layout into place. **Maple Junction** was set up in a bay window on the track side of the building. A seemingly modest placement until a set of freight locomotives filled every inch of those windows with a sight and sound visceral backdrop. Perfect.



Maple Junction is a N scale layout that was featured in the May/June issue of N-Scale Magazine of 2015. In fact, Ernie's stunning scenery stole the issue, including the cover photo. I enjoyed the layout, I enjoyed being there. And I especially enjoyed Ernie's enthusiasm and friendly nature. Paul Rondinone of the Rutland Railroad Association jumped in at one point to continue my tour of the depot. Of particular interest to me was some of the ephemera collected from the Rutland as well as other railroads. Hard, Heavy and Authentic. A large HO layout and a growing N scale pike were housed in another part of the depot. Matt Rockwell welcomed me into the layout room where his gorgeous circus train rolled enroute to its next big top.

On the way home I got to thinking, "did I walk into this with preconceptions? About the layout? About N scale? About railroad historical societies?"

In January of 2022 the next *Coupler* will come out. Maybe I'll address something you don't agree with. Stop, look and listen. Take a small risk and be curious and maybe, just like Maple Junction at the Center Rutland Depot, you might find biases and preconceptions that keep you from discovering the gem within another person. I found enough enthusiasm and joy in my time with Ernie Johansen to comfortably say, "today buddy, I'm with you! Today, I'm an N scaler."



The NER Divisions have been active with events and great articles in their newsletters. To read the articles mentioned below, visit the nernmra.org website, click on About Us, and then click on Divisions. On this page you will find a link that takes you to each of the divisions listed below. Once on the division's website, look for a link to their newsletter and find the issue mentioned.



Ed and Judy O'Rourke recently went on a road trip to New Orleans to visit friends and family. Ed shares photos of New Orleans street cars and a work train in Philadelphia in the June issue of *Red Markers*. Also in this issue is a photo of an interesting load: a turnout being transported on a flat car.

In the August issue of *The Red Markers*, Ed O'Rourke makes some observations from above. A prototype photograph of the New Haven's "Bumblebee" tugboat and car floats provided inspiration and information for Ed in his modeling.



The June issue of the Eastern Canada Division's *Hotbox* includes a couple stories to read.

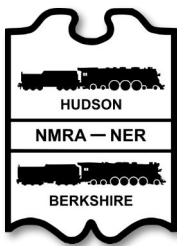
The first is a story that started with a mysterious photo. Research uncovered the history of railroad service in New Brunswick. But it also uncovered the origins of a passenger train called "The Whooper".

Also in this issue is a story of how the Dartmouth Model Railway Club is building a model railroad for a local young challenged adult.



Jim Walsh is the Garden State Division's tool guy and shares his thoughts on safety when using tools in the summer issue (number 158) of *The Whistle Post*.

Also in this issue, Fred Dellaiacono provided tips on converting Atlas turnouts to function like a Peco sprung turnout.



Richard Smith has shared a multi-part article on the construction of the Sparta, WI station on the Milwaukee Road in the division's *Form 19* newsletter. Look for Part 1 in the April issue covering the station's history and changes over the years. Part 2 in the May issue starts the discussion on the exterior of the station. The June issue of the newsletter finishes the discussion of Part 2 on the exterior.

Even if you do not model the Milwaukee Road, there is plenty of good information in Richard's articles.



reminds us of how it is done.

Richard Senges, MMR, provides a list of materials and steps in Part 1 of his article on using peppergrass to construct trees in the Lakeshores Division's July issue of *Lakeshores Limited*. Peppergrass has been used for scratch building trees by model railroaders for many years and Richard's article

Also in this issue is a short history of the Genesee-N-Ontario Model N-Gineers model railroad club. The club has N-Trak and T-Trak modules. Most of us have heard of N-Trak. But what is T-Trak?



Recently, Brandon Kulik traveled from Maine to California roundtrip on Amtrak. Brandon shares his experience in the July issue of *The Switch Tower*.

Also in this issue is a story by Bruce Campbell on the inspiration and construction of his Charles Street turntable and roundhouse for his NYNH&H Shoreline HO layout.



Compiled by Mark Harlow
NER office manager



If you missed John Ferraca's NERx presentation on Building Stone City Heights for his layout, you can watch his clinic on YouTube or read about it in the spring issue of *The Cannonball*.

Also in the spring issue is a very interesting article by Jon Silhavey. Jon has done a lot of painting with an airbrush and offers his recommendations for paint. He also discusses an interesting idea for creating gold decals. If it can work for gold decals, why not white? Jon also provides a template for downloading of an 85' passenger car that can be 3D printed in any configuration. You can watch Jon's clinic from NERx on 3D printing this car.



Vermont is one of the few Covid-19 safe havens in the USA and the Green Mountain Division is excited to have returned to in-person meetings, beginning with a Barbeque luncheon in July. Various members brought in projects from their workbenches and enjoyed operating on

the Bellows Falls module - which by the way, will be at the Mill City 2021 convention.

Fred Gemil of Plattsburg was a welcomed guest at our July meeting and extended an invitation to visit and operate his N scale railroad. We've taken him up on that and will be holding the September meeting at his layout. November will bring us another Plattsburg friend, we've invited Mike Evans to talk about his experiences going through the Achievement Program. Mike recently received his MMR and we've been looking for an opportunity to celebrate this with him.

CONNECTICUT RICHARD SAFRAN

MASSACHUSETTS
ERIC ELDER
SCOTT OGLESBY
RODNEY FEAK

MAINE
PAUL K MCGRATH

NEW BRUNSWICK
DOUGLAS MARGISON

NEW HAMPSHIRE
LAWTON D READ
OLIVER FAMILY
PAUL B MCBRIDE

NEW JERSEY
MIRIAM TUMIELEWICZ
GREG CIURPITA

NEW YORK
BRIAN VILLE
DALE A JANES

In Memorium

Henry Pierce



Henry Pierce, who was a longtime member of the Little Rhody Division, passed away recently. He served many years as Division Superintendent and was Vice President of the Northeastern Region for six years.

During this time he worked hard to recruit folks for the LRD and encouraged so many of us to expand our knowledge and expertise via the AP program. Many of the currently active members of the Division were first recruited by Henry. He significantly boosted both the

LRD's membership and the number of AP awards earned by Division members.

It was largely Henry's doing that several of us earned the title of MMR and also started others on the road to that goal. He established Rhody's HO modular railroad group, held regular Saturday clinic and social get-togethers at his home, and spent a great deal of time working with others on their layouts and judging their work for AP awards. One of his fondest projects was to have each NER division represented on the Regional Board.

Henry was a good friend, funny, cheerful and energetic to all. He was fortunate enough to enjoy NMRA activities into his 90's and we were all privileged to have met and learned from him. Henry left us at age 95, just a few years short of his goal to reach 100.

EDITOR'S NOTE

EARLIER THIS YEAR, AS I WAS JUST TAKING OVER THE REINS FOR THE NER COUPLER, I RECEIVED EMAILS CONCERNING THE PASSING OF JOHN DOOLIN AND HENRY PIERCE. I APOLOGIZE FOR NOT PUBLISHING THE INFORMATION SOONER. C CARFARO, EDITOR

John Doolin

a NMRA member since January of 1960 passed away on January 5, 2020. To view his obituary please visit <https://obits.masslive.com/us/obituaries/masslive/name/john-doolin-obituary?pid=194933647>





BILL BROWN MMR

Hiding in Plain Sight

A Keep Alive / Current Keeper follow-up

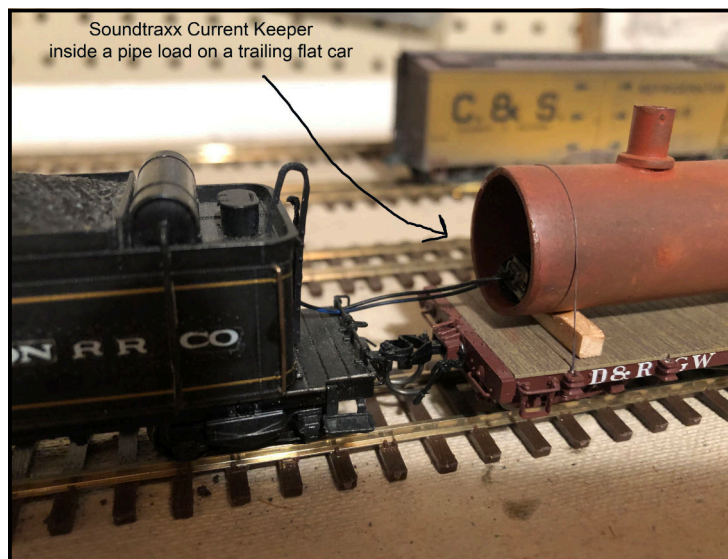
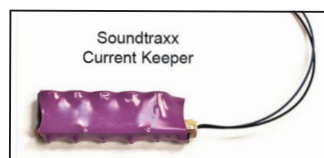
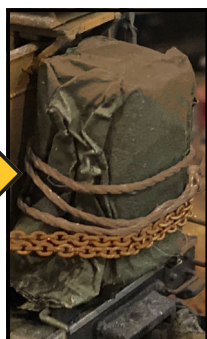
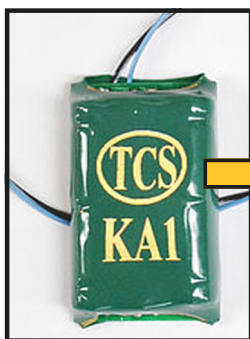
Several months ago *The Coupler* featured a story about the installation of a TCS Keep Alive in a steam locomotive. Here is a follow-up; a little story about a project of mine during this shut-in time.

Many of you know that Blackstone HOn3 locos are some of the finest and most detailed on the market. They are true gems. I own several of their C-19 locos and find them to be on the light side. When they encounter a bit of dirty track, it can prove somewhat finicky. I set out to solve that problem with CurrentKeeper/Keep Alive components. "CurrentKeepers" or "Keep Alives" are capacitors that are soldered to the decoder and store power to be delivered during times when a locomotive momentarily loses electrical contact.

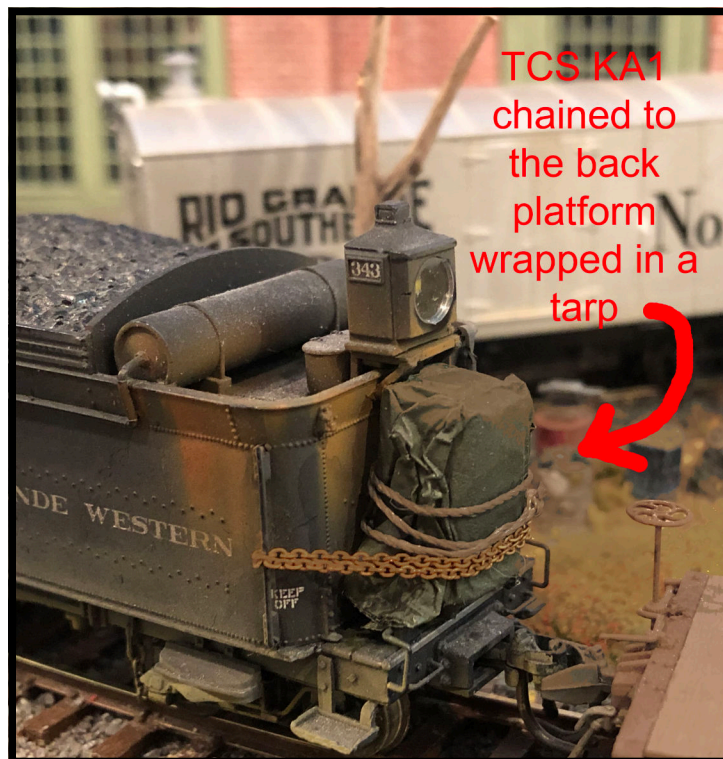
I started by ordering a CurrentKeeper from Soundtraxx. When I opened the tender of a C-19 for installation, I found the CurrentKeeper way too big. My solution was to mount it inside a pipe load on a trailing flat car. It runs FABULOUS now but presents a problem during operations when it needs to be turned on a turntable.

The next phase of this plan was to look for something much smaller. I found that Train Control Systems (TCS) has several Keep Alive components that are much smaller than the Soundtraxx version. They come in various shapes. I ordered 2 kinds thinking they would fit in the C-19 tender. NOPE, still too big. Darn it...I was determined to find a way to install these somewhere in that loco. So, I took the square TCS KA1, wrapped it in aluminum foil to simulate a tarp, painted it black, and fit it onto the rear platform of the tender as some sort of load was being carried there.

At first, I thought this might be a bit cheesy, but good enough for me for my operations. I later found out from several knowledgeable friends that strapping loads to the back platform of locos were a common practice. There are urban legends about prohibition times when valuable



▲ Soundtraxx Current Keeper inside a pipe load on a flat car



"packages" were often smuggled around this way. Whether true or not it makes a great story for my basement world.

The other Keep Alive I ordered was the KA2. Not wanting to waste it, I fabricated another viable solution. Being small and cylindrical I found a straw that fits snugly over it. This made a somewhat believable, if not slightly oversized replacement tank for the one on top of the tender.



These Keep Alives only store power for 3 seconds, a far cry from the 10 or so seconds of the larger Current Keeper, but I have found 3 seconds is plenty of time for smooth operations. Inconsistent pickup can be very frustrating. Finding creative ways to add these power storage devices can enhance pick-up and make operations a wonderful experience.



FRESH AIR • STALE BASEMENT

MAX BRISBEN
Assistant Editor



Remembering where you came from is an important exercise in knowing who you are. Most of us are fortunate enough to have grown up in the United States and therefore are in a position of immense privilege. This has been on my mind quite a bit over the Summer. My father passed away unexpectedly early in April, and through the process of cleaning out his house, settling his estate, and fulfilling his final wishes, I

have learned plenty about my family's history and how the actions of the past have enabled me to be who I am today.

My dad is the reason why I am a model railroader in the first place. 12-year-old-me couldn't have been happier when I unwrapped a brand new Broadway Limited PRR M1a 4-8-2 on Christmas Day in 2007! That was just a single moment in a long indoctrination that began before I was born. My grandfather was an eccentric craftsman with lots of interests and hobbies that he passed onto my father. He had an extensive HO Scale layout in the basement of their house, so I guess you could say that the seed was planted there.

What model railroading means to me has changed. With my dad gone, it's no longer just about the art of model railroading; it's about continuing his memory and a family legacy of craftsmen. One of the last things he said was how proud of me he was, for putting my work out there and writing for publications such as this one.

What was your reason for getting into the hobby? We all have our own, unique origin stories worth sharing and we want to hear them! Submit your own for publication today!

Writing submissions can be emailed to: editor@nernmra.com



TIMETABLE

AS COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ
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ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES
NORTHEASTERN REGION / NMRA ALL POINTS USA & CANADA

EVENT DATES EVENT LOCATION / TRACK

October 2, 2021	Southern New England Model RR Club Fall Show	Gardner, MA
October 2-3, 2021	Railfair 2021	Boxborough, MA
October 2-3, 2021	Rochester Model Railroad Club Annual Open House	Rochester, NY
October 8, 2021	Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club Open House	Pepperell, MA
October 8-11, 2021	Mill City 2021, NMRA Northeastern Region Convention	Westford, MA
October 9, 2021	Maine3Railers Annual Train Show	Augusta, ME
October 17, 2021	The Great Batavia Train Show!	Batavia, NY
October 19-22, 2021	2021 Members Mtg Ry & Locomotive Historical Society	College Station, TX
October 23, 2021	Seacoast Division NMRA 2021 Fall Event	, NH
October 30, 2021	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
October 30-31, 2021	Fall Model Railroad Show & Open House	Hingham, MA
November 6, 2021	Great Falls Model Railroad Club Annual Fall Show	Topsham, ME
November 6-7, 2021	The 46th Great New York State Model Train Fair	Syracuse, NY
November 7, 2021	49th Annual Poughkeepsie Train & Hobby Show	Poughkeepsie, NY
November 7, 2021	Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show	North Haven, CT
November 13, 2021	Annual Model Train Show	Quispamsis, NB
November 13, 2021	Monadnock Model Railroad Club Show	Peterborough, NH
November 20-21, 2021	ExTRAINaganza	Auburn, ME
November 20-21, 2021	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Wilmington, MA
November 26-28, 2021	Tour de Chocho	, NH & MA
December 5, 2021	Great Train Extravaganza	Albany, NY
December 11-12, 2021	15th Annual RIT Tiger Tracks Train Show & Sale	Rochester, NY
January 2, 2022	STEAM in the SNOW 2022	Conway, NH
January 29-30, 2022	Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show	West Springfield, MA

NER Coupler Submission Deadline Dates:

November 20, 2021 for January 2022
February 20, 2022 for April 2022
May 20, 2022 for July 2022

NER COUPLER

Welcomes your articles and photo submissions. Please send material to the editor or assistant editor at editor@nernmra.org or assteditor@nernmra.org.

FYI, We work on four issues of the NER Coupler at a time, a years worth. Articles and photos may be used immediately or may be slotted into a future issue. If you have submitted an item to us but change your mind, it is not a problem. Regrettable, if we've already placed it in an issue, but in any case, we will release it back to you.

NER PHOTO SHOWCASE



**LARRY CANNON'S PANDEMIC PROJECT
FAIRBANKS SCALE COMPANY,
ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT
FREIGHT HOUSE**



Submitted by Mike Tylick ▼

NERX reefer 1946 was spotted “chilled out” behind a Marshfield & Old Colony narrow gauge locomotive on Mike Tylick's On30 layout.



▲ Submitted by Chris Carfaro

Union Pacific GE ES44AC takes a break from photo ops and video reviews with Tony's Train Exchange to hold steady while Chris Carfaro works his Nikon “depth of field” while using unique light angles for a future article about theater lighting applications.



◀ Submitted by Edward J. O'Rourke

The story is that I bought this Ambroid kit for a Canadian Pacific reefer on eBay. It came without decals, which is the chance you take with eBay, so I substituted the NERX decals from the website and some refrigerator car data from an old Microscale set. The CP cars were different from what we usually see in reefers - instead of ice bunkers in the car ends the ice bunker was above the load full length of the car. Makes sense I guess since cold air sinks, unless it leaked into the load. The heralds indicate this refrigerator line is shared ownership by B&M, NH, and NER. This should drive the rivet counters nuts.

NER PHOTO SHOWCASE



◀ Submitted by Brett Stankiewicz GMD/Vermont

I seriously thought this was an exquisite model diorama when Brett sent this to me. I thought that was a Brekina Jeep Grande Cherokee in the foreground with a River Point Station utility bed pick-up. Nope, Brett has been train chasing and caught this outstanding photograph of current day ALCO power.



His comments: *Hey Chris, I had you in mind when I shot this scene in Scranton, PA last week. A former SP&S ALCo C425 was having issues, and the Delaware Lackawanna sent a crew in a utility truck to take a look.*

Brett is referring to my recent obsession with my railroad's company trucks. I'm just taking Jeff Hanke's advice to heart. Thanks. Brett.

Submitted by Max Brisben ▼

A Canadian Pacific ALCO heads a through freight with Thatcher Brook locomotives and pilots as it takes a seldom used diverted route on Max Brisben's Thatcher Brook Railroad.

▼ Submitted by Chris Carfaro

Two Atlas O scale EMD units painted and weathered for Guilford Rail Systems, GP-35 Springfield Terminal #206 and D&H 615 (yes I know the real 615 was a low hood)



Building an End-Cab Switcher, or in o



ALL PHOTOS BY MAX BRISBEN

Buttheads; the affectionate name that railroaders gave to end-cab switchers. I have always liked the stout, powerful stance of the EMD SW1500, so building one seemed like an inevitability. Finding a prototype was easy. In 1966 the newly formed and rapidly growing Vermont Railway purchased its first brand-new locomotive from EMD; an SW1500 #501. One of the first SW1500s ever built, it would supplement their fleet of ex Rutland Alco RS-1s and was equipped with special MU equipment in order to run in consist with them.

Finding photos of VTR #501 proved to be more difficult than I thought. It went through several changes during its time in service with the Vermont Railway and I wanted to build the locomotive in its as-delivered configuration, correct for 1969-1970. I ended up relying mostly on slides from my friends' collections to gather reference material since there aren't a lot of photos published online of its early days on the VTR. I started with an Athearn HO Scale RTR undecorated SW1500 kit. These kits are one of the best products Athearn has ever come out with. Internally, they run on Machima motors, have a metal frame, and all-wheel wired pickup which makes them run very smoothly. From the included parts, you can build an SW1500 in pretty much any configuration. They even give you both AAR type-A and Flexi-coil truck sideframes. I used additional parts from KV

Models, Details West, Cal Scale, and others. There is a full parts list at the end of this article.

To start, I cut out the molded-on front radiator screen and installed a KV Models SW1500 radiator fan kit. These stainless steel parts are precision engineered for a perfect fit, and go together onto the model very smoothly. The next parts I added were the horn, bell, antenna, and other discerning details. One part that was unique to #501 was the red MARS lights found on the nose, facing forward, and on the cab, facing reverse. I asked several former Vermont Railway employees who confirmed that these MARS lights were in use whenever the locomotive was. They were removed in the mid-1970s.

Another oddity about #501 is the lack of tread plate on the walkways. While most SW1500s were built with tread

plates, Penn Central, Vermont Railway, and a scant few others' were not. This was most likely done as a cost savings measure.

The Athearn RTR kit didn't include sand hatches or drop steps, so I ordered those parts directly from Atlas since they make the correct 2nd Generation EMD parts. I made one change based on artistic license, and it is the type of plow used. Originally, #501 was

equipped with a standard profile snowplow, but instead I used a low profile weed-cutter plow like the ones found on Vermont Railway #201 and #202. I think this improved the overall look of the model since the standard plow looks out of proportion to the rest of the locomotive.



ther words ...Buttheads

BY MAX BRISBEN



Building the handrails and railings was a challenge. The molded plastic ones that Athearn provides in the kit are flimsy and out of scale. Instead, I built my own handrails using brass wire and KV Models phosphor bronze EMD Stanchions. Working with the KV Models stanchions is tricky because you have to bend the tops around the railing in order to attach them. I found it easiest to bend the wire for the railings ahead of time, then add the stanchions around the railing. To keep them secured, I soldered all stanchions to the railings while they were on the model so they kept their shape. This was the most time consuming aspect of the build and it took me several weeks to finalize them.

The rest of the build went pretty smoothly. These RTR SW1500 kits are easy to work with and everything fits where it's supposed to, maybe too easily. I accidentally added an additional grabiron on the engineer's side of

the hood. For some reason #501 was built with only three, while most other SW1500s had four. The Athearn model has holes drilled and bolts molded for that top grabiron, so I decided to leave it as is.

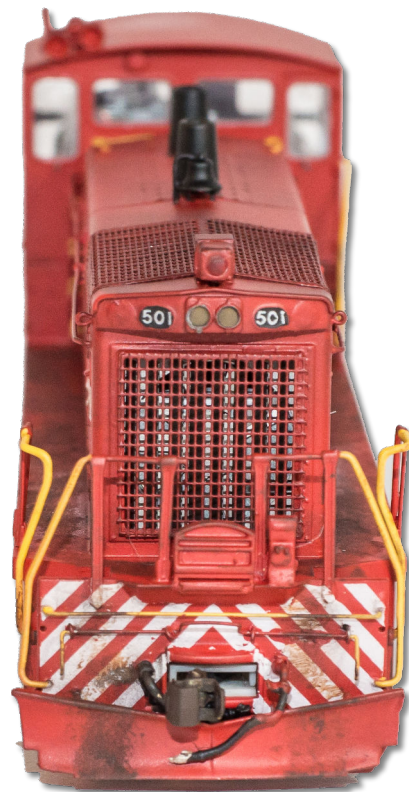
Painting the model was straightforward. I used Tamiya primer out of a rattle can and Tru Color Burlington Red out of an airbrush. I am of the opinion that the Burlington Red is the most accurate example of the shade that #501 would've been painted in by EMD at LaGrange given the era and presence of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy who were taking delivery of their brand new, bright red painted GP35 fleet at the same time. It's not too far of a stretch to assume that EMD's paint shop would've used the same red.

For the decals, I used both Highball and Microscale sets. To do the pilot chevrons, I waited to put on the air hoses, signal hoses, cut levers, and other pilot details until after I had applied the chevron decals. This made positioning and applying much easier since I wasn't fighting around all of the detail parts. Unfortunately, I had to use two sets of decals because of several graphics errors that were present on the Highball decal set. One corner of the VTR hood logo is cut off and one of the pilot chevron blocks is off-center.

I weathered the locomotive true to form for 1969-1970 with a dusting of road dirt and diesel grime using mostly weathering powders, sealed under Tamiya TS-80 matte clear coat. VTR kept their locomotives relatively clean so there was no need to go too wild with the weathering. For DCC/Sound I sent this one down to Christian Javier to do. He installed ESU LokSound 5, LEDs including working red MARS lights, and a custom printed speaker/enclosure assembly. Sometimes it's nice to have someone else do your DCC work for you. If I were to go back and do this build again, there are two things I would change. The first is that stupid fourth grab iron; gone. Second would be to replace the underframe detail parts included with the Athearn kit, instead using finer scale parts for the air tanks, plumbing, conduit, and appliances. For the time being, I'm pretty happy to have this one completed and ready to roll down the B&R.

Parts List:

- Athearn RTR Undecorated EMD SW1500
- KV Models SW1500 radiator fan kit
- KV Models EMD Stanchions
- Details West Weed cutter plow
- Cal Scale air and signal hoses
- Details West elbow drop air hoses
- Custom Finishing bell
- Details West Pyle MARS lights
- Cal Scale S3L horn
- Custom Finishing firecracker antenna
- Cal Scale uncoupling levers
- Atlas 2nd gen EMD drop steps
- Atlas EMD sand fill hatches
- A lot of hand-bent brass wire
- Highball and Microscale decals
- Tru Color paint





WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

ALL PHOTOS BY JEFF HANKE

JEFF HANKE

PAVING YOUR STREETS



Most of our layouts have streets somewhere near the tracks. Some parallel and some cross them. Either

way, you'll need to learn to model streets to have a believable layout. Paving your streets is easier than you might think. It just takes a little patience.

DIMENSIONS

Streets come in varying widths depending on how fast the traffic travels. Small neighborhood or country roads are narrower than major thoroughways or interstate highways. The width varies wildly, but if you want to be prototypically correct, you'll have to measure the actual street you are modeling. I use a 3 1/2 inch width for a standard two-lane road, not counting the shoulders.

Other factors to consider are curbs and sidewalks. These too come in varying heights and widths. A sidewalk in downtown New York City is wider than the one outside of your house. I use 3/4 inch width for my standard sidewalks. If your street doesn't have a sidewalk, it likely has a gravel shoulder on each side. I use 1/2 inch width of my standard shoulders.

First, lay down the track in the area the road will go. Make sure any

adhesive or paint is completely dry before beginning the street paving process. Draw on your subroadbed where you want the street to be. If your street has drainage ditches on either side, dig them out at this point. Once I dig mine into the foam, I coat the ditch with gray house paint and sprinkle in rocks and stone dust to create the proper texture.

PAVING AND CROSSINGS

Once you know where the street will go and any needed drainage ditches are in, it is time to pave. Now, this is a multi-step process, so be patient. You'll likely not like the look after the first step. We'll put the road in completely first, and if there is a sidewalk, we'll put that in afterward. I use a low dust joint compound from Home Depot. This product is normally used to smooth out sheetrock taped seams. It's premixed, so just open the lid and start applying. It is light grey in color when wet, but dries almost white. It can be used for either concrete or asphalt streets or sidewalks.

I use metal spatulas to apply the compound directly to the foam. I apply it about 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick. Once you have it relatively smooth, let it dry. Don't overwork the compound and don't worry if you missed a spot. Make sure it is completely dry, usually 24-48 hours, before doing the next step. Also, don't be shocked if it cracks, as it shrinks.

Next sand with 400 grit sandpaper to be as smooth as you can get it. At this point, it will not look good, but it is getting there. Reapply joint compound to fill low spots or cracks. Let



it dry completely again and resand. Repeat this process until the road is smooth.

If you are doing a concrete street, now is the time to add the expansion lines. Use a sharp point of an X-ACTO knife to carve the lines with a ruler. Don't press too hard, as that will chip the joint compound. You can also carve some cracks if you want, using the same technique. Concrete roads routinely crack, so it's a nice detail to add.

At this stage, you are ready to color your road or sidewalk. I start with vacuuming the road to make sure any joint compound dust is off of it. Remember that no road is pitch black in color. A brand new asphalt road is a very dark gray color, but not black. The asphalt fades over time and can be a medium gray at the end of their useful life.

I use weathering pastels to color my roads. I treat the road like a canvas and blend grays to give me the look I want. I apply the colors with a 1/2 brush and blend them with my fingers. Treat this coloring process carefully. As you apply color, you want to start with light grays and slowly darken the area. As you darken the road, it is making the road look newer as you go. Don't go too dark too early. Keep all brush strokes and finger blending in the same direction as a car would travel. Do not go crosswise on the road. I tend to keep the edges and middle of the road darker, as those areas see less traffic. I also tend to add a darker streak in the center of the lane, to represent oil drips from passing traffic. Once you are happy with the look, seal the road with Testors Dullcote.

If you are adding sidewalks, at this point, lay 1/8 inch by 1/8 inch strip styrene to represent the curbs. I paint the strip styrene light gray prior to installation. You can now add the sidewalk using the same joint compound method, or you can use sheet styrene. Either way has been successful for me. The same basic techniques can also be used to model parking lots, which really are just streets in a different shape.

I have yet to put the yellow or white centerline markings on any of my roads, but that can be accomplished with a paint marker, strip tape, or careful masking and airbrushing.

I look forward to sharing more on the new East End going forward, but until then...keep on workin'.



Dick Towle & Family, 120 Years worth of contribution to the NER



As a past NER president (1970-1972), Hub President in the mid 60's and still a member plus having served as the Assistant Convention Chairman for the national in the 60's and 70's under the late Gene Colburn I thought I might show how one family has accumulated well over 120 years to the organization. I'm still kicking and active serving as Chairman of the Hub Divisions Conway Scenic RR's Dinner Train trip through Crawford Notch next June. The trip originally scheduled for June 13th this year and is in the process of being rescheduled to next June, Covid problems hopefully being behind us.

The caption detail for the photo above are from left to right, Myself, age 85 (61 years a member), Grandson Tim age 20 (12 years a member), son Rick age 59 (49 years a member) and my wife Diane. Missing is granddaughter Anna 17 who also been a member for 6+ years.

The date of the photo was June 26th at Maine Model Works in Yarmouth, Maine who hosted the sidewalk exhibition that included other dealers and clubs such as the Eastern Maine Model RR Club, Highball Graphics and the 470 RR Club owners of several operating locomotives on the Conway Scenic Railroad.

Don't know if you want to use it, but I think it's a good example of generation "passing the torch. Take care have a nice day, Dick Towle, Life Member 00957

(Absolutely want to use it). Thank you Dick and your family for sharing with us this photograph and allowing us to celebrate not only your participation but also a meaningful contribution to the Northeastern Region, NMRA as well.

-Chris (Editor)



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By James L. Lauser
Manager, The Great Train Extravaganza
Board Member, Hudson-Berkshire Division

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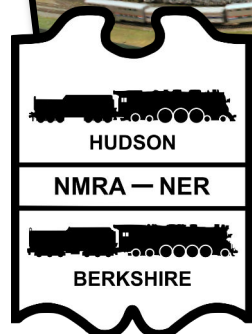
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Plus tables promoting the NMRA, NER and some white elephant tables where HBD members could sell their surplus items.

Educational Displays

Door prizes



All applicable CDC and NY DOH guidelines will be observed.

Sponsored by the Hudson Berkshire Division of the
National Model Railroad Association.



INTERVIEW BY CHRIS CARFARO



A couple of months ago I had decided that our Master Model Railroaders here in the NER could use a little extra press attention. So David Durr kindly agreed to speak with Jim DeMarco and I got ahold of Chuck Diljak. We talked for a while and I came away with more than a few worthy impressions to share.

First and foremost was Chuck's approachability. Ok, as I see it he and all of the Master Model Railroaders are Rock Stars in our small NMRA pond. He was open, funny and very willing to talk. As he went through his seven certificates on the path to MMR, he found himself saying "no way am I going to get 'cars'. It is not a natural part of the hobby for me." And in fact, he did. In the process he found that he was learning an awful lot. That this process became a lot less about judging and evaluations and much more about the pleasure in really learning something new. "You can find some redundancy in building cars but you end up cheating yourself. You're not going to cheat the system or the judges. You're going to shortchange you, from learning more. A surprise came with trackwork. I wasn't so sure about hand laying track, but once into it, I found it quite a lot of fun. Let go of your own expectations, they might be wrong."

I mentioned to Chuck that I knew people who didn't want to stand for the judging. Why bring in something you worked hard on, only to have someone tell you how wrong it is? To this Chuck replied "attitude. Focus on the positives, look to have a good experience" Lord knows the judges want you to succeed. They try and frame criticism in a way that can inspire you to achieve more. That this is all part of the learning and you're doing it!" "Things change, you will change. And before long you will find yourself taking in the knowledge people in the NMRA want to share with you."

Chuck has successfully obtained the following certifications:

Model Railroad Author, Association Volunteer, Association Official, Model Railroad Engineer:Civil, Model Railroad Engineer:Electrical, Master Builder:Structures, Master Builder:Cars, Golden Spike

CHUCK'S APPROACH TO CAR BUILDING PEAKED MY INTEREST AND AT MY REQUEST, HE WROTE THESE COMMENTS BELOW FOR US.



EVALUATED MODELS

When anyone is working towards Master Model Railroader in the Achievement Program, they may think the road is a very long one. It was a 15 year journey for me. So, I can understand members wanting to study the requirements for a certificate and find ways of completing them without a lot of fuss.

For example, I completed two "model building" certificates in the Achievement Program, Structures and Cars. When you review their requirements, you will discover they have similarities. You need to build twelve structures, half of them scratch built, half of them evaluated for merit, and half need to be different types of structures, one being a bridge. For cars, you need eight, half of them scratch built, half of them evaluated for merit, and half need to be different types of cars, one being a passenger car.



NON EVALUATED MODELS

Both certificates seem daunting at the start. With structures, if your railroad standardized designs for stations, towers, or another type of structure, then it is a simple exercise in building seven of the same structure, a bridge, and four other types of structures. Similarly, with cars, you can build five of the same car but with different numbers, a passenger car, and two other types of cars. This approach will meet the requirements of both certificates.

But I took a different approach for two reasons. One of the NMRA's goals is to "advance the global scale model railroad community through education." The Achievement Program is a cornerstone in the

What's Around the Next Bend? Meeting a childhood hero!

BY JOHN SOCHA

I grew up on Long Island two blocks from the Montauk Branch of the Long Island Rail Road. When I was about ten years old (1960), I became interested in the trains going by and quickly became a railfan. After a few years, my mom allowed me to ride my bike further from home eventually going as far east as Patchogue, west to Babylon, and north to Ronkonkoma.



LIRR #228 Oyster Bay NY, 1969
Courtesy of heirs of Mel Finzer via Wikimedia Commons

My older brother and my Dad had built a Lionel O-27 layout in the basement. When Tom left home to serve in the U.S. Air Force, I began to simulate LIRR operations on the Lionel railroad.

Attending school a few blocks from home, I would walk along Main Street in East Islip which passed by a drug store. Near the front window was a magazine rack where I discovered a copy of Model Railroader Magazine for 25 cents. Getting hooked, my mom bought me a subscription which continued until I left home also to serve in the military... and I still have

NMRA's efforts on education. If you build multiple copies of the same car or structure, you miss the opportunity to learn about other types of cars or structures. If I was going to spend the time building these models, I wanted the challenge to learn about different materials, adhesives, underframes, brake systems, purpose, details, and designs. That does not mean they need to be difficult. They just need to be different.

The other reason for my approach is more personal. I lose interest and motivation if I build multiple copies of the same model. I get bored. By building different car models, I managed to finish the requirements for this category in a year. I honestly believe that if I built multiple copies of the same car, it would have taken me longer to finish this category since my interest would have suffered. I would have missed the adrenaline rush of finishing a car and the excitement of building the next car if they were all the same.



those magazines to this day.

So, what is the point of this article you might say? Those magazines were a wealth of information as the O-27 railroad gave way to an HO scale layout. And somewhere in them, I began to notice articles written by a man named Harold Russell. What appealed to me were the drawings for various structures and other items that Harold photographed and measured. One of the earlier articles I read was of the Coldwater freight station on the NYC mainline just west of Rochester NY. That article and plans appeared in the April 1968 issue of Model Railroader. Harold became a sort of hero to me because I also had an interest in mechanical drafting and liked the detailed descriptions of the places he visited.

As the years went by, I eventually moved to western New York. In 1984 I was hired by Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester as a mechanical draftsman. I soon discovered that Harold also worked for Kodak and in the same building as I did, him on the third floor and I was on the first floor of Building 205 at Kodak Park. Eventually, I ventured up to visit Harold but never did establish a relationship.

Now Kodak is a distant memory as my employment situation changed several times over the years leading up to retirement. However, 2007 offered me the opportunity to begin building 'that dream layout', or at least one that would fit into the space available. Then in 2008, I became a member of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and the Lakeshores Division (LSD).

After becoming more involved in the LSD, we hosted an open house in November of 2019. During that open house, my hero Harold Russell, also an LSD member visited my NYO&W Southern Division layout! However, it being my first open house and doing it solo, we did not have an opportunity to talk much. Disappointed, I later contacted Harold and invited him back for a one-on-one visit. Harold instead invited my wife Cathy and me to visit his home and meet his wife Kathy and see his O-scale model railroad, the Genesee Falls and Ontario. Harold even gave us both passes to travel between "All Stations".

Recently, Harold posted in the July 2021 Lakeshores Limited Member Marketplace that he is selling various items from his model railroad. I again contacted Harold and arranged to visit and purchase some of his scratch-built structures and a scratch-built refrigerator car.

Harold's models are now on display above my New York, Ontario, and Western Southern Division and will always be treasured. They remind me of his inspiration that began many decades ago. Thank you, Harold!



Master Model Railroader Interview



Jim DeMarco MMR # 678

INTERVIEW BY DAVID DURR

How many model railroaders credit their moms for teaching them their modeling skills? The Lakeshores Division's Jim DeMarco emphatically states it was his mother who taught him how to build models, starting with stick airplanes as a 10-year-old in the early 1950s. He parlayed that early

mentoring into a life-long enjoyment of building models, and a model railroad, that earned Merit Awards, then AP Certificates.

From January 2019 to April 2021 those AP Certificates came at a rather rapid pace. In order, he received the awards for Structures, Scenery, Cars, Electrical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Volunteer, and Motive Power. In a little under two and a half years, Jim had completed the MMR requirements. The “joke” among those who know Jim is that he really spent 50 years working on his MMR; he just didn’t know it!

Jim had been a long-time NMRA member, but not an active member. He knew of the Achievement Program but never felt it was possible for him. How was he going to get his structures, his scenery, his trackwork, etc. to the judges? After attending his first regional convention in Rochester in 2015, Jim started attending divisional meets. At one of those meets a few years later, Lakeshores AP Chair, Ned Spiller, gave a presentation on the Golden Spike Award. That’s when Jim realized the judging would come to him. He got his Golden Spike in January 2018.

At that point, Ned began advising Jim on what was already done and what was still needed for AP Certificates. A little tweaking here and there on existing models, a couple of new models, a hand-laid test track, some volunteer activities, and a bit of paperwork got the job done. To anyone thinking of pursuing AP Certificates, Jim says, “Make sure you have someone come and look at what you’ve already done. Regular model railroaders can do this!”

Jim is currently the Company Photographer for the Lakeshores Division. He and his very supportive wife, Kathy, frequently volunteer their home and his layout for Division activities. Jim was active in Boy Scouts for over 40 years and guided many Scouts to their Model Railroading Merit Badges. He is still active in the Masons and is Master of the Kendall, NY Lodge. Jim once said of the latter organization that “it takes a good man and makes him better.”

Jim DeMarco is a very good man...and well-deserving of his MMR.





NER CONVENTION

MillCity 21 is upon us!

*Westford, Massachusetts
October 8 - 11, 2021*

Here are some quick reminders...

CONVENTION VOLUNTEERS

Every convention demands a lot from the host division and the HUB Division is pulling out all the stops for us. And, in the spirit of comradrie I would encourage anyone attending to volunteer and help share the load. Contact Bob Macauley at bob.macauley@gmail.com or call 978-505-3485

CELEBRATION OF MODELS

MODEL CONTEST



PHOTO AND MODEL BY JIM KERKAM

The MillCity 21 Model Contest Chair has agreed to sponsor a one-time special model contest category for the popular NERX virtual convention car introduced at our internet NERx convention last December. An award will be given to a model NERX car receiving the highest total points.

Since the model will be judged by the same criteria as any other freight car entry, any entry receiving 87.5 points or more will be eligible for use towards the AP Program. Because there is no prototype for these models, any model incorporating our NERX artwork is eligible. However, it is strongly advised that the builder include photographs of similar prototype cars to prove that such a car could have existed in real life.

PHOTO CONTEST

The MillCity 21 Photography Contest Chair has agreed to sponsor a one-time special photo category for the popular NERX virtual convention car introduced at our internet NERx convention last December. An award will be given to the photograph judged to be the "best" that includes our NERX artwork.

Photographs will be judged by the same criteria as entries in other

categories, but our NERX artwork must be seen in the image. Creativity is encouraged.



PHOTO AND MODEL BY MIKE TYLICK

MODEL SHOWCASE



PHOTO AND MODEL BY CHRIS CARFARO

The Model Showcase is a display-only exhibit. Many folks are not interested in participating in a judged event, even if it is Popular Vote. Some may want to share a partially completed model if there was some particularly difficult and tricky modeling technique involved. Others may simply just want to share some of their models. And hey, this is not about someone else bringing in a display. This is you bringing in something to share. Think about it.

UPDATED COVID-19 POLICY

As previously communicated, our COVID Policy is in place to keep our members and attendees of the Mill City 21 Convention safe. We encourage you to update yourself online at the Mill City 2021 website before you arrive.



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